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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) covers developments from 25 June 2016 to 15 December 2016 and brings up to date, since the issuance of my report dated 8 July 2016 (S/2016/598), the record of activities carried out by UNFICYP pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2300 (2016).

2. As at 15 December 2016, the strength of the military component stood at 883 (56 women) for all ranks, and the strength of the police component stood at 67 (17 women) (see annex).

II. Significant political developments

3. During the reporting period, negotiations between the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, continued in a sustained and results-oriented manner. The leaders maintained a regular and often intense schedule of meetings, while negotiators and experts also continued to meet regularly.

4. Through their intensive work in this leader-led process, Mr. Akıncı and Mr. Anastasiades succeeded in taking the talks further than they have ever been since 2008, achieving major progress in four of the six negotiation chapters: governance and power-sharing; property; the economy; and matters relating to the European Union. They also, for the first time, conducted negotiations on the issue of territory, held in Mont Pèlerin, Switzerland, which I opened on 7 November 2016.

5. Following two rounds of meetings in those negotiations, the leaders announced in a statement issued by the United Nations on 1 December that they would meet in Geneva from 9 to 11 January 2017. They also announced that a conference on Cyprus would be convened on 12 January in Geneva with the added participation of the guarantor Powers — Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. They further stated that other relevant parties would be invited as needed.

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III. Activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

6. UNFICYP is intended first and foremost to prevent a recurrence of fighting and to contribute to the maintenance of law and order and a return to normal conditions. Its mandate requires reconciling security considerations and the maintenance of the military status quo with allowing Cypriots who live and work in the buffer zone to pursue civilian activities and enjoy full and productive lives. Such an approach, when successful, builds confidence between communities and contributes to the overall effort by the United Nations in support of the peace process.

A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

7. The integrity and stability of the buffer zone were maintained during the reporting period. UNFICYP liaison between the opposing forces was particularly important in preventing any escalation of low-level disputes.

8. Throughout this time, however, UNFICYP sought to address challenges to its authority in the buffer zone. The opposing forces' continued non-recognition of the 1989 aide-memoire and lack of agreement concerning the exact delineation of the ceasefire lines complicated the Force's efforts to fulfil its mandate. Construction by both sides is seen by UNFICYP as conferring a military advantage and therefore as a violation. Such construction continued to cause concern, in particular when not accompanied by prompt deconstruction of the old infrastructure.

9. The prevalence of closed-circuit television equipment at positions that remain guarded continued to be a concern. It is the Force's view that such installations confer a military advantage. In addition, military positions violating the status quo and established by both forces inside the buffer zone, in particular at Strovilia, remain in place and are classified as permanent violations. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

B. Demining activity

10. During the reporting period, UNFICYP integrated a mine-clearance capacity from the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) into the mission to focus on the five areas in the north that had been identified in 2015 as Suspected as Hazardous Areas, and to provide support to the Committee on Missing Persons to protect its staff from possible risks from explosive remnants of war. Since 22 August, a total of 21,757 square metres of land in four locations has been cleared and released through manual and mechanical mine clearance, and in the process seven anti-tank mines have been removed and destroyed.

11. Despite assurances by the Turkish Cypriot security forces, no progress was registered in the clearance of the minefield just north of the buffer zone in Mammari, where heavy rains led to mine-washes into the buffer zone in 2014 and

2015, nor was progress made in clearing the four known remaining minefields in the buffer zone, of which three belong to the National Guard and one to the Turkish forces. While the Turkish Cypriot side has indicated that it would accept the clearance of all four areas as a package, the Greek Cypriot side maintains the position that its three minefields are required to counter a perceived threat. Efforts continue at all levels to advance a more comprehensive approach to demining, both inside and beyond the buffer zone.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

12. Relations between UNFICYP police and the respective police forces remained collaborative and constructive at all levels, with daily communications to enhance cooperation and address operational matters within the buffer zone. In parallel to that liaison, UNFICYP police facilitated the work of the Joint Communications Room and the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters. During the reporting period, the Joint Communications Room exchanged 83 communications on criminal matters with an intercommunal dimension.

13. From 24 June to the end of November, 805,269 official crossings of the buffer zone were recorded. The role of UNFICYP with regard to all interactions at, around or through crossing points is expected to expand with the planned opening in 2017 of two crossings, at Deryniea/Derinya and Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç, per the agreement reached in the Technical Committee on Crossings. Throughout the reporting period, UNFICYP police continued to provide escorts for convoys of civilians and supplies at the Limnitis/Yeşılırmak crossing point, in accordance with the agreement reached by the leaders in October 2010.

14. In early November, UNFICYP escorted police from both sides into the bicommunal village of Pyla to conduct simultaneous searches of eight casinos that had been operating illegally for several years. As a result, the eight casinos were closed, and 2 Turkish Cypriots, 33 Greek Cypriots and 9 foreign nationals were charged. The two mukhtars of Pyla and the residents themselves expressed their relief and appreciation for this outcome. UNFICYP commended both sides for their careful work in tackling crime, thereby reducing the risk to the residents of Pyla.

15. No incidents were reported in November 2016 in connection with the Greek Cypriot demonstrations on the anniversary of the 1983 unilateral declaration of independence, in contrast to the events in November 2015, during which two vehicles belonging to Turkish Cypriots were targeted by Greek Cypriot youths throwing stones. No information was made available during the reporting period regarding the status of the judicial proceedings against 25 students who were charged with various offences related to those events.

16. The Force continued to confront unauthorized activity in the buffer zone and aggressive behaviour by those engaged in such unauthorized activities. Hunting was of particular concern, as armed hunters who are often in fatigues can be mistaken for military personnel. UNFICYP intensified joint patrolling with game wardens and liaison with local authorities to address the 54 hunting-related incidents in the buffer zone by Greek Cypriot hunters during the reporting period. In one incident in November, hunters fired in the direction of unarmed peacekeepers. As at

13 December, charges had been brought against three suspects in relation to those events.

17. In an effort to support a return to normal conditions, UNFICYP continued to engage with the authorities, local community representatives and civilians to facilitate the implementation of civilian activities inside the buffer zone. In accordance with established procedures, UNFICYP allowed farming, grazing and construction activities, provided those activities did not compromise safety and security in the area. More than 719 permits for civilian activities were issued during the reporting period, and all 12 applications for civilian construction projects in the buffer zone were approved. Unauthorized farming, however, continued to be problematic and a source of tension. The university in Pyla continued to operate without UNFICYP authorization.

18. During the reporting period, the number of intercommunal civil society initiatives in support of the settlement talks increased considerably, often assisted by UNFICYP within the buffer zone. The Mission facilitated the participation of more than 3,000 Cypriots from both communities in more than 50 sporting, cultural, educational and other civil society events. In addition, UNFICYP facilitated 93 intercommunal gatherings at the Ledra Palace Hotel, with more than 2,300 participants. In September, UNFICYP opened the buffer zone for more than 500 Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot trade union members to mark together the International Day of Peace. In October, for the third consecutive year, the International Cyprus Car Rally, including 43 Greek Cypriot and 11 Turkish Cypriot drivers, crossed the respective ceasefire lines below the Venetian walls of old town Nicosia. In November, during the second meeting of the leaders in Mont Pèlerin, Switzerland, more than 2,000 Cypriots and 120 organizations from both communities participated in a bicommunal celebration and concert in support of the settlement talks.

19. The Cyprus Women's Lobby held a conference on 4 November in which my Special Representative participated and at which activists from civil society, government and the international community discussed the role of women in promoting peace and security. The conference focused on promoting the role of women in the peace and security agenda, including within the Cyprus context, and touched on issues of relevance to a future solution of the Cypriot question, including education, human security and the role of women.

20. UNFICYP also facilitated three meetings of political party representatives under the auspices of the embassy of Slovakia. On 26 October, the political parties issued a joint press release calling on the Technical Committee on Education to move forward with confidence-building measures.

21. Intercommunal activity in the village of Pyla, the only mixed village in the buffer zone, continued to strengthen. From 13 to 15 August, more than 700 people participated in cultural performances at an intercommunal festival in the village. On 12 November, 130 Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot residents joined in a visit to Paphos facilitated by UNFICYP. Another such visit took place on 3 December, to the Apostolos Andreas monastery in the Karpas Peninsula.

22. Progress in the implementation of confidence-building measures, as agreed by the leaders in 2015, has been mixed during the reporting period. Further to the

agreement reached in the Technical Committee on Crossings, work commenced to facilitate the opening of two crossings, in Deryniea/Derinya and Lefka-Aplici/Lefke-Aplıç. Work remains to be done on the interconnectivity of electricity grids and the interoperability of mobile telephones.

23. UNFICYP continued to facilitate the work of eight intercommunal technical committees established in the framework of the talks. The Technical Committee on Crisis Management finalized a proposal to establish a cooperation mechanism to address potential natural disasters or humanitarian crises. The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, acting with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union, has now completed 14 projects, notably the restoration of the main church complex of the Apostolos Andreas monastery, funded by the Church of Cyprus and the Evkaf Administration and finished in November 2016.

24. With a view to fostering opportunities for interaction between the communities as well as freedom of worship, UNFICYP facilitated 44 requests for religious services and commemorative events involving more than 10,000 individuals, which were either conducted in the buffer zone or required crossings to the north. In addition to those events, UNFICYP facilitated the crossing to the south of nearly 1,700 pilgrims to the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque, in Larnaca, on 7 July and 15 September.

25. In May 2016, the Turkish Cypriot authorities announced criteria and procedures to be applied regarding requests for religious services in the north. During the reporting period, the Turkish Cypriot authorities approved 35 of 72 requests for services submitted to UNFICYP for facilitation, compared to 44 of 73 requests during the same period in 2015. None of 20 requests submitted to UNFICYP for facilitation for worship at sites inaccessible since 1974 was approved during the period, compared to the opening of nine new sites for worship during the same period in 2015.

26. The religious leaders of Cyprus continued to demonstrate their commitment to joint dialogue and the promotion of religious freedom, supported by the Embassy of Sweden. The visit on 7 July to Hala Sultan Tekke to celebrate the feast of Bayram included, for the first time, Greek Orthodox, Muslim, Maronite, Armenian Orthodox and Latin Catholic representatives. On 9 December, the religious leaders launched a joint appeal via video message to encourage all those with information on the missing to come forward and support the work of the Committee on Missing Persons. On 30 November, the name day of Apostolos Andreas and the first day the monastery was open to the public, approximately 2,000 people attended a service and visited the monastery throughout the day with the support of UNDP and UNFICYP.

27. The Force continued to deliver humanitarian assistance to 329 Greek Cypriots and 103 Maronites residing in the north and facilitated the post-mortem transfer of two Greek Cypriots for burial in the north. The Force also twice visited the Greek Cypriot primary and secondary schools in the Karpas Peninsula. The Turkish Cypriot authorities rejected 6 of the 117 textbooks that were proposed for use at the schools by the Greek Cypriots. The Turkish Cypriot authorities also rejected three of nine teachers nominated to work at the schools in the Karpas and denied the

reappointment of two teachers who had previously worked in those schools. While no Greek-speaking doctors were approved to attend to the health needs of elderly Greek Cypriots and Maronites in the north, a Greek Cypriot nurse continued to provide services at a local clinic on the Karpas peninsula.

28. No issues were identified as a result of the Force's continued engagement with the relevant authorities in Larnaca and Limassol regarding access to health, welfare and educational services for Turkish Cypriots living in the south. While Turkish-speaking pupils continued to have access to Turkish language education at a high school and primary school, there were no developments regarding the establishment of a Turkish language school in Limassol.

29. UNFICYP conducted visits to 12 Turkish Cypriots held in Greek Cypriot detention facilities and attended one related court hearing to monitor and assist in addressing any legal and humanitarian issues faced by them. There were no Greek Cypriots detained in Turkish Cypriot detention facilities during the reporting period.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons

30. As at 15 December, the bicommunal team of archaeologists of the Committee on Missing Persons had exhumed the remains on both sides of the island of 1,192 of 2,001 individuals on the official list of missing persons. To date, the remains of 740 individuals have been identified and returned to their respective families, including, during the reporting period, those of 115 individuals. In line with the permission received in November 2015, the Committee conducted, in 2016, 10 excavations in military areas in the north, leading to the recovery of the remains of nine individuals. Throughout the reporting period, the Committee continued its cooperation with UNFICYP and UNMAS experts on the mitigation of risks posed by unexploded ordnance and the use of detection technologies by Committee field teams.

31. On 28 July, following two years of discussions, members of the Committee on Missing Persons signed an agreement to initiate research into the archives of security forces and international organizations present in Cyprus during the periods of 1963 to 1964 and 1974 with the aim of locating information on additional burial sites of missing persons. To that end, the Committee on Missing Persons commenced work on creating a dedicated archival research unit. During the reporting period, the Committee published a book documenting its work, entitled "Beneath the carob trees: the lost lives of Cyprus". The Committee also organized high-level photo exhibitions in New York, Brussels and Geneva with the aim of securing continued financial and political support.

V. Transition planning

32. UNFICYP continued to work on planning for transition in relation to a settlement, as requested by the Security Council, establishing a joint working group with my good offices mission and the support of relevant Headquarters departments. On 22 July, UNFICYP briefed the leaders on initial transition planning. In early November, the negotiators returned to such matters, in the presence of my Special

Adviser and my Special Representative, and agreed in principle that the United Nations would focus on several key areas of support in a post-settlement period. Further discussion with the negotiators took place on 15 December.

33. The transition planning undertaken during the past year has demonstrated the extent to which the United Nations capabilities on the island will need to change in order to effectively support the implementation of an agreement and assist the sides with the challenges of a post-settlement period. Defining these new capabilities will depend on further progress in the talks on key outstanding issues and will require thorough engagement with the sides on their expectations for the future United Nations role. It should be noted, however, that with current resources and in its present configuration, UNFICYP has limited ability to deliver appropriate support to a settlement. Moreover, such planning is but one aspect of a much broader need for preparations for the implementation of a settlement that is the responsibility of the sides.

VI. Conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse

34. During the reporting period, three category 2 allegations were reported and referred for investigation. There were no reports of category 1 allegations, including allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse.

35. The Mission's training programme on conduct and discipline and sexual exploitation and abuse exceeded planned outputs, with a total of 20 training sessions conducted during the reporting period. These involved 1,003 mission participants, including 799 military personnel, 23 United Nations police personnel, 167 civilian personnel and 14 UNMAS personnel. As part of the Force's awareness-raising activities on sexual exploitation and abuse, a human trafficking awareness training session was conducted on 29 July 2016, with the participation of personnel from UNFICYP, the Office of the Special Adviser, the Office of the Committee on Missing Persons and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

VII. Financial and administrative aspects

36. The General Assembly, by its resolution 70/273, appropriated the amount of $57.8 million gross for the maintenance of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to $18.4 million from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of $6.5 million from the Government of Greece.

37. As at 19 December 2016, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus amounted to $13.8 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $2,024.1 million.

38. Reimbursement of troop costs was made for the period up to 31 October 2016, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for

the period up to 30 September 2016, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VIII. Observations

39. Unprecedented progress has been made in the leader-led negotiation process over the past 19 months. I commend Mr. Akıncı and Mr. Anastasiades for their efforts. Through their vision, courage and leadership, they have advanced the talks in a definitive manner. At the same time, a number of delicate and important issues remain. The process has now reached a critical juncture, and I encourage the leaders to build on the momentum as they embark on the most crucial and perhaps most demanding part of their common journey. I also encourage all Cypriots to support the leaders as they move into the decisive weeks ahead, in pursuit of the common goal of reaching a comprehensive settlement as soon as possible. As the talks enter a pivotal stage, it is more important than ever that the guarantor Powers, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and other relevant actors remain committed to supporting the ongoing and determined efforts of the leaders.

40. The growing efforts demonstrated by citizens' groups in Cyprus to build support for the settlement talks and reunification are also to be commended. As the leaders progress in their negotiations, I encourage them to fully engage civil society throughout Cyprus with a view to fostering broad grass-roots support for a solution. Women's groups have been an important part of civil society's efforts to support the talks, including their call for incorporating a gender dimension into the peace process in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). I encourage the leaders to redouble their efforts to fully reflect the principles and aims of resolution 1325 on women and peace and security in their continuing deliberations.

41. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the vital humanitarian work being carried out on behalf of the families of victims through the Committee on Missing Persons. In the light of the advanced age of both relatives and witnesses, it is critical that the Committee be given the means and the information required to accelerate its work. In that respect, I am heartened to see that the resources of the Committee have been enhanced during this reporting period. This additional capacity is a particularly important effort in the light of the advanced age of many of the witnesses and relatives. The Committee's efforts to heal the wounds of the past not only are critical for those families directly affected by the tragedy of the missing, but also support the broader process of reconciliation between communities.

42. Progress relating to confidence-building measures will remain important in the period ahead. The opening of the two crossing points, in particular, will lead to major improvements in the lives of affected communities. While the progress made towards the safety of Cypriots via the clearance of five minefields in the north is welcome, much more remains to be done. The lack of action on the clearance of the minefield adjacent to the ceasefire line near Mammari, for example, continues to pose unnecessary risks. Minefields on the island have little military value, but pose a serious threat to life. I urge both sides to take advantage of the dedicated UNMAS demining capacity within UNFICYP in the coming months to rid Cyprus of

minefields across the island. Such clearance would greatly reduce the risk to civilians and allow increased freedom of movement in and around the buffer zone.

43. No serious incidents of violence between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots were reported during the November 2016 demonstrations. At the same time, I note the continued lack of information regarding the judicial processes pertaining to the events of November 2015. A clear resolution of those cases will serve to build confidence between the communities and signal that such acts will not be tolerated in Cyprus.

44. As a fundamental human right, there can be no doubt that freedom of worship across the island is important in and of itself. At the same time, it can also provide a context for enhanced interaction between the communities. I call for all restrictions on freedom of worship, including restrictions on access to religious sites, to be lifted.

45. I note joint efforts by the religious leaders continue to lend much-needed and broad-based support for freedom of worship and the peace. Sustained open dialogue combined with a commitment to freedom of worship by both sides can only serve to open doors for greater understanding and trust.

46. I continue to call upon both communities to exert efforts to create a climate conducive to achieving greater economic and social parity between the two sides and to widen and deepen economic, social, cultural, sporting or similar ties and contacts, including with a view to encouraging trade. Such contacts promote trust between the communities and help to address the Turkish Cypriots' concerns regarding isolation. I urge both leaders to persist in addressing those issues.

47. UNFICYP continues to play an important role in maintaining a calm and secure environment and helping to rebuild trust between the communities. Its ability to do so rests in large part on the commitment of the two sides to refrain from challenging the Force's authority. I urge the sides to formally accept the aide-memoire of 1989, without which there is repeated contestation of the United Nations delineation of the ceasefire lines. In the same vein, I call on both sides to support the Force's role in pre-empting and responding to civilian, law and order and military-related issues and in encouraging intercommunal activities to rebuild trust and cooperation.

48. UNFICYP is devoting increasing resources to deterring unauthorized civilian incursions into the buffer zone. Continued reports of aggression by hunters in the buffer zone against UNFICYP personnel are also of concern. The news that charges have been filed against those involved in the recent firing of weapons in the direction of UNFICYP personnel is welcome. I urge the authorities to ensure legal redress against the perpetrators.

49. As argued in previous reports, closed-circuit television cameras can confer a military advantage and constitute a violation of the status quo if unaccompanied by a reduction in military personnel. At the same time, closed-circuit television can help to monitor illegal activity in the buffer zone and thus contribute to improved security in the area. I therefore encourage steps towards a permanent reduction in the military presence and posture along the ceasefire line, starting in those positions

that have been enhanced with closed-circuit television cameras, particularly in the militarized area, within the Venetian walls of the old town of Nicosia.

50. I welcome the initial steps taken by the sides to engage with UNFICYP and my good offices mission on transition planning, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2300 (2016). The establishment of a dedicated working group under the auspices of UNFICYP to enhance this work, together with inputs from the sides, is timely. Such planning will depend on further progress in the negotiations and on the deliberations of the sides regarding a United Nations support role in a reunified Cyprus. I underline the importance of UNFICYP, and any follow-on mission, being ready to respond to challenges both in the lead-up to and following the referendums. I hope to report back to the Council in due course on further developments on this matter.

51. I recommend that the mandate of the mission be extended for a period of six months, until 31 July 2017. I once again express my gratitude to the 36 countries that have contributed, since 1964, either troops, police or both to the mission. I pay tribute to the 186 peacekeepers who lost their lives over that period in support of peace in Cyprus. It is incumbent upon all parties to work in a determined manner towards a comprehensive settlement, to which all Cypriots aspire and which would obviate, in due course, the continuing need for a United Nations presence.

52. I would like to express my appreciation to Elizabeth Spehar, who began her assignment with UNFICYP on 10 June, for her service as my Special Representative in Cyprus and Head of Mission. As Deputy Special Adviser, Ms. Spehar has been directly supporting the talks in addition to leading the Force's support to my good offices mission during this crucial period.

53. I welcome UNFICYP Force Commander, Major General Mohammad Humayun Kabir of Bangladesh, who succeeded Major General Kristin Lund in November.

54. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to my Special Adviser, Espen Barth Eide, for his determined efforts to facilitate the talks between the sides.

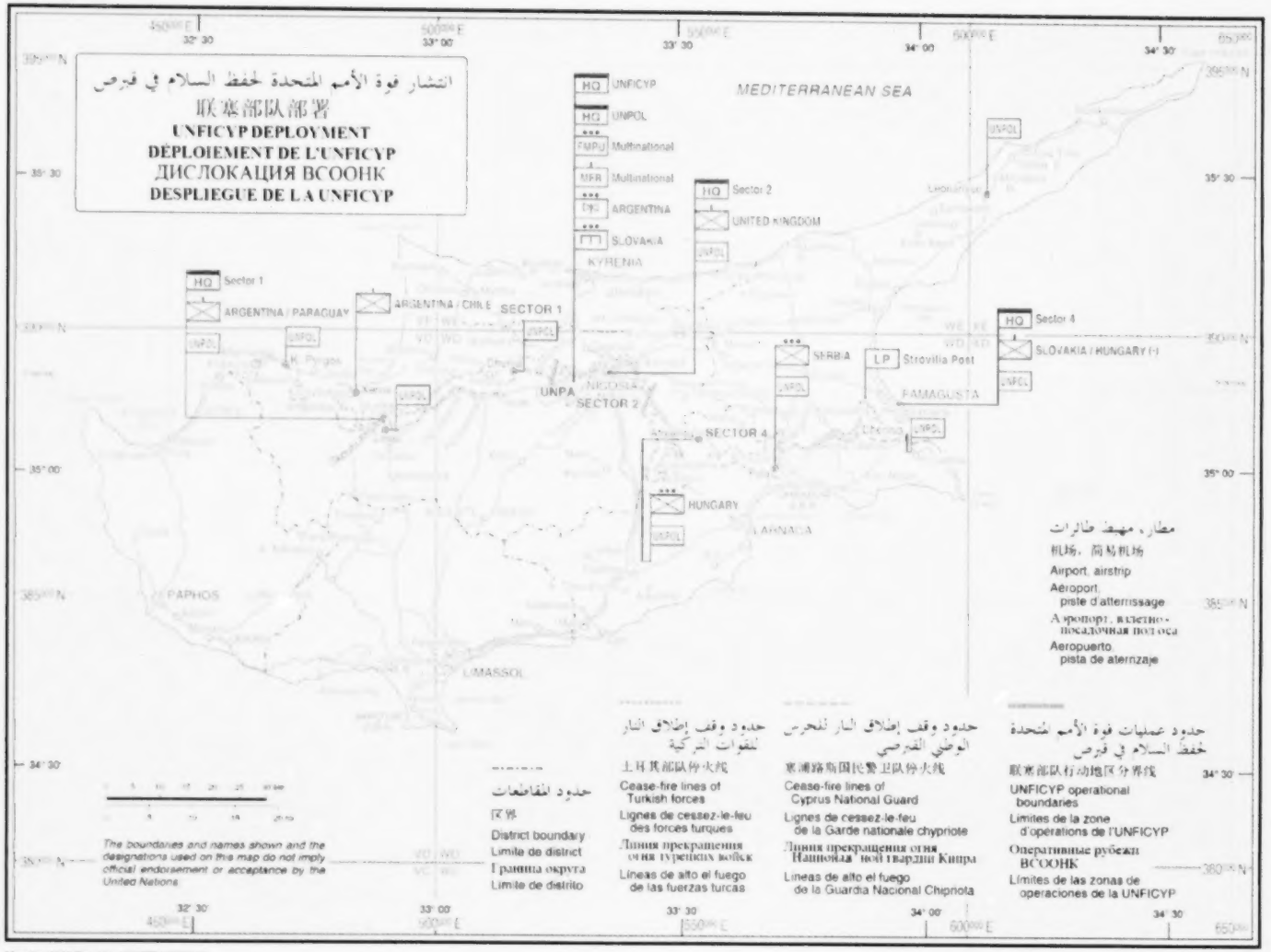
55. Finally, I extend my thanks to all the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and commitment with which they are discharging the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

Annex

Countries providing military and police personnel to the United Nations operation in Cyprus (as at 15 December 2016)

Country	*Military personnel*
Argentina	275
Austria	4
Bangladesh	2
Brazil	2
Canada	1
Chile	14
Hungary	77
Paraguay	14
Serbia	47
Slovakia	169
Ukraine	2
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	276
Total	**883**

Country	*Police personnel*
Australia	7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5
Bulgaria	2
China	6
India	5
Ireland	12
Italy	2
Lithuania	2
Montenegro	4
Romania	4
Russian Federation	3
Serbia	2
Slovakia	5
Ukraine	8
Total	**67**



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